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Mr. Kennedy and the Cuba Briefing

President Kennedy's contention that he was not informed during the 1960 campaign that the Eisenhower administration was sponsoring training of Cubans for a possible later invasion to attempt to overthrow Castro is one of the most astonishing announcements to come from the White House under any President in many years.

The President contends that he was not told of the training of Cubans in the U.S. until after he was elected. He carried out the invasion under his own planning after becoming President — in a manner that failed.

Mr. Kennedy's contention was made public by his Chief Press Secretary, Pierre Salinger, in response to statements in Richard Nixon's currently published book, *Six Crises*.

The Nixon book says that Mr. Kennedy was informed during the 1960 campaign of the training of Cubans in Florida and Louisiana for invasion, having been briefed on it under orders of President Eisenhower, as were Mr. Nixon, Lyndon Johnson and Henry Cabot Lodge.

Throughout the campaign, Mr. Kennedy constantly attacked the Eisenhower administration for "not doing anything" to get rid of Castro. Mr. Nixon says that Mr. Kennedy knew all the time

DAVID LAWRENCE

U.S. Paying for Change Of Administrations

WASHINGTON, April 26—Maybe it's time to urge the petty politicians to lay off each other and recognize the seriousness of the Cuban situation. For it's serious in more respects than one.

It's not important to look back just to assess blame, political or otherwise. It is more important to learn from the past and then go ahead decisively.

To understand what's been going on here, it is necessary to say that President Eisenhower and his advisers felt more than a year ago that it was desirable to encourage the Cuban exiles who wanted to liberate their homeland. Vice President Nixon and others participated in those discussions. Some people in the State Department dragged their feet and kept urging all the reasons why no help should be given. Division of opinion was responsible for many months of delay. Meanwhile, the Communists intensified their help to Castro.

When the presidential campaign got under way, it became necessary for President Eisenhower to take Senator Kennedy into his confidence and tell him what was taking place. There was no dissent by Mr. Kennedy but an eagerness to find out what was being developed to hasten the exit of Fidel Castro from the scene.

Discussion of dangers and pitfalls became prolonged at various levels of government here and caused Vice President Nixon, for instance, to become impatient as he urged that the plan be carried out promptly. But it proved to be

the ire of Senate Republican Leader Dirksen, and others. Mr. Udall was asked if the American people today support "this kind of American involvement in an attack on Castro." The secretary replied:

"Well, I don't think there is any doubt but that they do. The fascinating thing about this particular business is that here was a plan conceived by one administration—this, from all I can find out, began over a year ago and President Eisenhower directed it. And here the actual plan was carried out under a successor administration. I certainly think the attitude of the former president, of Mr. Nixon, and of these other people is indicative of the fact that we do stand together as a people and that whether what we did was right or wrong, that there is national unity on questions like these."

Perhaps Mr. Udall was trying to bolster national unity, but his off-the-cuff remarks came to be construed as critical of the preceding administration. He expressed regret afterward that this had happened.

Actually, one good purpose is served by examining in retrospect what did happen. For obviously there were some weaknesses revealed. It's no secret that the United States hasn't been equipped to carry on guerrilla warfare. Also, it is well known that Vice President Nixon has been recommending right along that the Central Intelligence Agency confine itself to information-gathering and that it be relieved of any responsibility for guiding such operations.

Above is a facsimile of a part of David Lawrence's column as it appeared in *The Times* April 22, 1961, stating that Mr. Kennedy was briefed during the 1960 presidential campaign on the training of Cuban troops in the United States for invasion against Castro.

that the Eisenhower administration was fostering a plan of ejection of Castro by force at the hands of Cuban rebels. Mr. Nixon could not reveal this publicly in the campaign and Mr. Kennedy's constant hammering at the public that the Eisenhower administration was doing nothing about Castro, and that Mr. Nixon was advocating nothing, left the Republican candidate at a terrific disadvantage.

Some political observers have said that literally tens of thousands of votes all over the country went to Mr. Kennedy because of his at times daily denunciation of both President Eisenhower and Vice President Nixon about Castro, and Mr. Nixon's failure to advocate overthrow of Castro by force if necessary.

What makes the Kennedy contention so astonishing is why, if it is true, it was not brought forth in April, 1961, when the Cuba invasion flopped because of President Kennedy's refusal to supply American air cover for the invaders. Virtually every detail concerning the planning of the invasion from the Eisenhower days to the failure became public then—including information that Mr. Kennedy was briefed fully on the training plans during the campaign.

In the adjoining column, we publish a facsimile of David Lawrence's article in *The Times* on April 22, 1961 in which he states that Mr. Kennedy was briefed during the campaign on the training of Cubans. At and just before the time Mr. Lawrence wrote this column, an editor of *The Times* was in Washington. He received the same information directly or indirectly through three authoritative sources. What he learned also was published then in *The Times*.

Mr. Lawrence's column as reproduced here also was published during the week of April 21, 1961, in the *Washington Star* and the *New York Herald-Tribune* as well as in scores of daily newspapers all over the nation. Mr. Kennedy has stated that Mr. Lawrence is a columnist he reads regularly. The *Herald-Tribune* also is part of his daily reading.

Many of the Washington correspondents for big daily newspapers around the nation, especially the big liberal papers of the East and Middle West, also printed this same information in April, 1961.

So, if Mr. Kennedy was not briefed, why on earth did he not say so at that time?

Further, approximately three weeks ago, Mr. Nixon appeared as a guest on a night television show. This was before publication of *Six Crises*, but Mr. Nixon discussed the forthcoming book with the conductor of the show. He made the same statement then that is in the book—that he was at a terrific disadvantage during the presidential campaign on the Cuba issue because Mr. Kennedy knew of what was being done, yet constantly denounced Mr. Eisenhower and Mr. Nixon for not doing anything; while Nixon naturally could not reveal the American training of Cubans for invasion.

President Eisenhower states now that he instructed Allen Dulles, then Director of the CIA, to brief Mr. Kennedy, Mr. Nixon, Mr. Johnson and Mr. Lodge identically. Mr. Dulles now says he did not brief Mr. Kennedy on plans for any "overt or covert act" planned against Cuba. There is a matter of semantics there—what did Mr. Dulles mean by "overt or covert" act?

And if Mr. Dulles did not include Cuba invasion plans in his campaign briefing of Mr. Kennedy, why didn't he—in view of Mr. Eisenhower's instructions? Mr. Dulles was the top inside man on the Cuba plans, which were under CIA. For normal foreign affairs, a State Department executive would have been the logical choice for briefing Candidate Kennedy—not the CIA head. The very selection of Mr. Dulles implies that Cuba invasion was to be the top briefing topic.

Whether he was or wasn't briefed, in view of all of the nationwide publication in April, 1961, that he was briefed, and in view of the recent television statements of Mr. Nixon, why has Mr. Kennedy waited until now to present a denial of something that for nearly a year has been looked on as established factual history?